



## How to Recognize a Structure Containing a Meth Lab from the Inside

Social workers, utility workers, repairmen, and babysitters are just some of the people who routinely enter the homes and other structures belonging to relative strangers. Whether you are in the homes of others every day or every once in a great while, you should learn to recognize the “telltale signs” of the inside of a house or other structure containing a meth lab. In addition, you should know what to do when you find yourself in a house or other structure that you believe may contain a meth lab.

### What to look for

Houses and other structures containing meth labs may exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- **Appearance and Cleanliness of the Structure** – Houses and other structures hosting meth labs vary enormously in their appearance. It may be immediately apparent that meth is being manufactured and used in the structure. A structure hosting a meth lab may be unkept, unsanitary, and full of chemical odors. On the other hand, the structure may also appear very normal and orderly. The appearance of the structure depends on the care that the meth manufacturer takes to hide his or her unlawful activities.
- **Presence of Meth Ingredients** – The best indicators of meth production are the presence of the ingredients used to make the drug. Homes containing meth may have either (1) a large amount of a single meth ingredient, such as Sudafed, or, alternatively (2) a significant number of ingredients and supplies used to make meth. Here are some typical meth-making ingredients and supplies:
  - Cold medications containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine
  - Lithium batteries
  - Ether and/or camping fuels
  - Anhydrous ammonia
  - Hydrogen peroxide
  - Red Devil lye
  - Sulfuric, muriatic, and/or hydrochloric acid
  - Coffee filters
  - Funnels and turkey basters
  - Improvised glassware

While many of these ingredients and equipment are common, the amounts and the form of the ingredients needed to manufacture meth are different than what the average person would possess. For example, multiple boxes of cold medicine, or cold medication removed from blister

packs, may indicate the presence of a meth lab. The same is true for coffee filters covered with strange stains or powders.

- Presence of Equipment or Apparatus Used to Make Meth – In addition, there may be strange types of equipment or apparatus in the house used to manufacture meth. For example, soft drink bottles with hoses attached or cans of camping fuel with holes punched through the sides or bottom indicate the presence of a meth lab.

### **What to do**

**STAY CALM.** Do your best to act in a composed manner that does not cause fear or panic on the part of any suspected meth makers.

**PROTECT YOURSELF.** Leave the structure as calmly and quickly as possible. Do not return to the structure or confront its occupants. Both meth labs and meth users are extremely dangerous and unpredictable. Keep yourself and your family safe, and let law enforcement authorities do their job!

**PROTECT OTHERS.** If other innocent people are present, do your best to get them to leave the structure with you.

**ALERT LAW ENFORCEMENT.** Alert local law enforcement authorities without delay.

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[www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov)



### **Consumer Fraud Hotlines**

**Chicago**  
1-800-386-5438  
TTY: 1-800-964-3013

**Springfield**  
1-800-243-0618  
TTY: 1-877-844-5461

**Carbondale**  
1-800-243-0607  
TTY: 1-877-675-9339